1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

walk backwards, or on their heads. Mortals sometimes see ghosts, but the apparition seals their lips so that they cannot recount their experiences. Death invariably follows. Shamans and other mortals endowed with great powers have been able to penetrate to the realm below, and the knowledge of conditions there has been derived from their accounts. Food is scarce in that land and ghosts are often driven up to earth to search for it. Even a small morsel is enough to satisfy their hunger, so that mortals throw fragments on the fire for the benefit of their dead relatives. If a person drop a crumb it is because a ghost has hooked it away from his hand; no wise Bella Coola ever picks up such a morsel, knowing that to do so would offend the hungry spectre. Deceased beings are generally feared, although instances are known in which they have shown kindness, particularly to their relatives. Like so many supernatural beings, they figure most prominently as patrons of *kusiut* dancers (see vol. II, chap. 1). Further information concerning them is contained in the description of life after death.

Not even a complete list of beings would exhaust the beliefs of the Bella Coola concerning the supernatural, since any unexpected visitation is attributed by them to this source. For example, when Mackenzie appeared, the first white man with whom the Bella Coola had come in contact, they thought that he must be from another world. Some thought him a dead man returned to life, and others considered him a supernatural visitor from above who had fallen down to earth, as did their first ancestors. The latter view prevailed, and it was ultimately decided that he must be *Qomcus*, a supernatural being resident aloft of whom little was known. This name was applied to him, and it has since been given to all white men.[18]

[18] Although it was in 1793 that Mackenzie passed down the Bella Coola valley, a number of stories of that event were still remembered in 1922. What most impressed the Bella Coola was his ability to make fire quickly. One man, now living, stated that he had heard from his mother that her father had spoken with him. Traditions of this type are valuable as reflecting the interests of a people, but their historical accuracy may well be doubted. One Kimsquit man, for example,

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

* 556 Pre-
sently the guests assemble, those who are *nuxsē* wearing on
[575] their heads one or more weasel skins as a mark of membership
[237] in the society. Each takes the seat to which he is entitled,
[292] the chiefs behind the fire, or on either side of it, the commoners,
[554] slaves, and foreigners in the two corners nearest the door. The
heralds move to and fro between door and fire, their constant
exchange of remarks adding to the general interest of the af-
fair. It is the function of a herald to lend dignity to chiefs by
[203] the tone of his observations, but should one fail to live up to
his station, the herald is privileged to comment thereon. In
some respects his position approximates that of a buffoon, but
as a herald always receives valuable presents, the office is
sometimes accepted by ambitious young men, willing to under-
take the slightly derogatory duties in return for the substantial
gain.

● 264 A number of young lads, friends or relatives of X, distribute
* 556 the food. It is placed in boxes; an important chief is not called
[883] upon to share with any one, whereas six or seven men of no
standing may partake from one box. These receptacles, with
[578] whatever food remains in them, are taken home by the guests;
otherwise the host would be insulted. Many boxes are lost in
this way, a source of considerable irritation. After the first
course, a second follows, consisting of a different kind of food
in another box, and in some cases there is a third, and even a
fourth course. A chief must never appear stingy. The more
he gives, the more does his prestige increase. Also, a man who
gives freely receives abundantly, so that generosity brings its
583 reward.

* 556 Next, the father or other male relative of X's wife, or a
[537] fluent friend who speaks for him, stands up and makes a speech,
extolling the fame of his own family by sketching in general
[425] outlines one of the myths of his ancestors, and announcing that
X's wife is taking to her husband some portion of it. This may
[424] be the prerogative of using a spoon carved, for example, with
[532] the shape of a beaver; or a carved box, or a totem-pole with
certain figures on it, or the right to use a painting of a grizzly
bear on the wall of his house, or an ancestral
name.

[illegible]

go to the homes of their friends in the village; it is a matter of convenience, not of ritual.

In the evening, there may be no rite of any kind, but X often invites everyone to his house for the performance of non-ceremonial dances. The singers strike up one of his *nasak* or *o'ulk* (I, p. 173) tunes and he dances to it. Then a tune belonging to one of his relatives is beaten out, and he too dances. After several have thus performed, a meal is served and all disperse. No supernatural beings are in attendance, hence there is no solemnity to the occasion; the evening's rites merely serve to show the guests the dances owned by their host and his family.

As each party of guests arrives the same procedure is repeated. X provides food for those who have assembled from day to day, so he anxiously awaits the last-comers. When at last they come the guests from all other towns are in their allotted sections of X's house, and are free to make gibes at the tardiness of those latest in appearing. Occasionally, hard feelings are engendered in this way, although it is an established custom to mock at the last to arrive. They seat themselves and a small amount of food is given them.

RITUAL CARRIED OUT BY THE GUESTS

Two youths, chosen by X for the purpose, sprinkle eagle down over the heads of all those present, as far as possible blowing it first over the chiefs. It serves as a token of good-will, and marks also the ceremonial nature of the occasion. Then a leading *nasak*, perhaps a *sibi*, stands up and says in effect:

"Thank you for coming. You are welcome. We thank you for coming to witness what X has done. He is delighted to have you here, because he has lost many of his relatives and wishes to perpetuate their memory. They would be grieved if he did not do so."

An elaborate meal is now served by a number of young men.

The first *course* is dried coho salmon mixed with olachen grease. The fish is first placed in boxes, approximately one to every four persons, though a chief may be honoured by an individual box, and the grease poured over it. As always, any food not consumed is carried away. Failure to do so would be an insult to X. Then round wooden dishes are distributed into which are poured the berries of *Vibernum pauciflorum*. The waiters pour olachen grease over these and the mixture is eaten with wooden spoons. These two foods are invariably the first meal of a potlatch.

If the *sisi* of the last guests to arrive has not removed the power given him by the Bella Coola experts, he now stands up and shakes his rattle as a signal that he desires to start his dance. The Bella Coola *sisi* also stands up, and the visiting *sisi* contorts himself and finally pretends to produce something from his stomach, which he throws across to his colleague. The latter feigns to catch it, cries *hoip* loudly several times, and makes the motions of hurling what he has just received into the room at the back of the house where the initiates are concealed. Then he sits down. Meanwhile the last-to-arrive party of guests have started to beat out the tune of one of the *sisaid*[19] songs of their own *sisi* who dances in time to it. Then another song is beaten out and another member of the party dances, and so on until all have danced who desire to do so. Each wears his own head-dress and each performs in the manner already described. After the dancing, the members of this party of guests give presents to X and other Bella Coola chiefs. There is no fixed ratio between the value of the gifts and the rank of the recipients, though chiefs receive more than lesser men, and X most of all. These presents are *spandjut*, which may be translated as "eagle down-ness," merely a mark of friendship and goodwill. They are not returnable. Goods so received are distributed by X with his other possessions at the potlatch, care being taken not to return them to the donors, which would be insulting.

[19] See also songs (I, p. 317) are sometimes used.

guests have been placed in readiness. X selects as many youths as the number on whom he intends to confer the names which have already been announced and exhibited among the Bella Coola, but are now to be made known to the foreign guests. He wants the lads, who are to substitute for the initiates, on the various boats. Everybody understands that these are merely representatives. X requests two chiefs to act as his announcers, choosing two with good voices and abundant self-confidence. To one of these X whispers the *second* name of one of the initiates.

"His name is now——" calls out the announcer, pointing to one of the substitutes, and the latecomers readily recognize the initiate intended, from the use, in conjunction with his new designation, of his well-known ancestral name. The heralds repeat the new name with the usual bellowings, so that it becomes well known to all present. In like manner the *second* name given to each initiate is publicly announced. The substitutes receive no advantage from their part in the proceedings.

Then the boxes are opened and red elderberries poured into the canoes in front of the guests. Stones are provided with which the visitors pound the fruit into pulp which they proceed to mix with their hands, as chicken grease and cranberries are added. Then X's helpers distribute spoons and the feast commences. All start to eat, but after an interval one of the leading Bella Coola chiefs strikes the side of his canoe with a spoon, as a signal that all must stop. X has several dishes in readiness. If he is wealthy some of these will be carved in the shape of beaver, eagle, or other form in which an ancestor appeared. These dishes are filled with the food which all have been eating and then placed before the principal chiefs, who thus have a second supply. At this point the singers begin to beat out an ancient song of the type known as *ts'ats*. Each of these has been handed down from the distant past, when some chief, ancestor of X, had it composed for himself at a potlatch. The theme is always about the form or forms of his

disturbed except, rarely, when it is necessary to obtain a portion of a skeleton for magical purposes. In such a case, the coffin lid must be lifted up on the side away from the corpse, so that he looks within over its upturned edge. A person failing to obey this injunction will soon die.

Burning or deposition near the grave is not restricted to the actual utensils and artifacts of the deceased. There, too, must be laid dried salmon which a man has smoked for winter use, as well as pulverized berries and other foods made ready by a woman; to eat food prepared by a dead person causes indescribable sickness. In recent years, the crew, if a man dies after sailing and sewing a sail, is allowed to ripen, and then eat unharvested. So, too, the canoe in which a body has been brought home must be destroyed. The Bella Coola are not always able to state reasons for these actions, but it is apparent that the underlying sentiment is that the taboo of death lies upon any object prepared by the deceased, or that has been in contact with a corpse.

The rituals described above may be considered as religious in nature; almost equally important are the social requirements of paying those who have assisted at a funeral. This indebtedness falls on the near relatives, though all members of the ancestral family are obligated in a somewhat indefinite manner. If a canoe has been destroyed that did not belong to the deceased, the owner must be recompensed. Presents must be given to the pall-bearers, to the women who have the burning bark, to the grave-diggers, to those who delivered laudatory orations, and to all others who assisted in any way. Failure to do so brands the relatives as miners with little respect for the deceased; lavish recompense shows that they have the outlook and minds of chiefs. Consequently, even poor people try to give as generous rewards as possible, both for their own status and out of respect to the dead person. Unfortunately, it was impossible to obtain details of the ceremony at which this takes place. The increase in wealth in recent years has made it possible to give memorial potlatches soon after death

viewed by the presence of welcome guests. Mention is frequently made of the journey taken by the dead man to the heaven of his ancestral myths. In addition to being an orator, the speaker must also be a *numáit* chief, since it is felt that none other can have the necessary assurance and poise to refer to these most sacred and important subjects. During the speech, assistants blow eagle down over the heads of all present.

Food has been prepared in advance, and as soon as the speaker has finished, the heralds call the guests to partake of it. The first course is then distributed, smoked salmon mixed with olachen grease. Speeches are sometimes delivered during this part of the meal, as well as at the second course, cranberries with more olachen grease. If the guests have arrived during the afternoon, there is no delay between the feast and the ritual that follows, but if they have come during the morning, there is a gap until the evening. Visitors usually time their arrival for the early part of the afternoon.

The next event is a speech from one of the foreign chiefs, phrased in grandiloquent terms similar to those used by the Bella Coola orator. He speaks of the manner in which the supernatural Carpenters have hunted the deceased, but reminds his hearers that this is because *Alpuntám* has decreed it, therefore all must be for the best. He refers to the dead man's crest, and to the manner in which this guise will be available to him. During the day, the singers have been careful to learn the tune of a mourning song used by the ancestral family of each foreign chief likely to speak. This they now beat out, often assisted by some of the guests, and always accompanied by their singing. No one dances to accompany the song; it is merely a tactful mark of sympathy, implying that the speaker himself knows the grief occasioned by death, and, also, that he too is sufficiently important to be able to use a mourning song. If, as is usually the case, there is more than one influential chief in the party, a second rises to speak, repeating in different terms the sentiments expressed by his predecessor. Another

U.S. Bureau of Ethnology, B. 9 (1902-1904): 1948
NMAI Archive Copy

elder Bella Coola, asking him to announce that he, Schooner, with Dan and George, was going to hold a memorial potlatch that evening to which all were invited. Robert is not a herald but undertook this duty owing to the absence of qualified heralds. Meanwhile the grave had been filled in and the people began to drift away as it rose to ground level. Their attitude throughout had resembled that of white people at a funeral, and the hilariousness that characterizes so many Bella Coola gatherings was entirely absent except among the playing children. By 4.30 P.M. all had left the scene.

In view of the large number of guests expected it had been decided to hold the memorial potlatch, not in one of the old-fashioned houses, but in the village hall, built according to the white man's style of architecture and illuminated with swinging gasoline lamps. This is a large, rectangular building, undivided by partitions, with a stage at one end and a door at the other. About 6.30 P.M. the singers, Nebuchadnezzar, Jim Pollard, Billy Pollard, Alec Davis, Kimsquit Alec, and Robert Hood, gathered at the hall and seated themselves below the stage. Billy Pollard had prepared a mourning song during the day, Kimsquit Alec another, and it was decided to use two others that were well known to all. The singers sat and practised these four for some time, while at intervals various Bella Coola strolled in, listened for a few minutes, then walked out again. Anyone was allowed to do so, but few availed themselves of the opportunity. Meanwhile Captain Schooner had brought $10 worth of rice, raisins, and condensed milk which he placed beside a huge iron cauldron outside the front door. Jim To-Morrow, a Bella Coola of no great intelligence, volunteered to act as cook and soon had a fire blazing and the food boiling.

About 8.00 P.M. the people began to assemble, bringing their own plates and other utensils. After considerable delay and chatter, the guests took their places in the hall, seating themselves regardless of rank on benches ranged along the two side walls and massed at the rear. By mutual consent a portion of the single row of benches along the left wall was reserved

for the Ceremony and other foodstuffs. The cook began to bake the raw corn bread provided by Captain Schooner; these were taken by some of the younger men who poured helpings into the dishes of the guests. Spoons had been forgotten, and there was delay until these were provided by divers split from a block of wood for the purpose. Contrary to ancient usage, no revenge was made to serve food to the guests in order of their rank. Men, women, and children were sitting everywhere, the infants kept moving around and crying continually throughout the performance, but no one seemed to be disturbed thereby.

When everyone had eaten, Nithuchaitawaw, who had been sitting facing the other singers, knelt on the floor to attract attention and then rose to speak. He asked the help of all to make the ceremony a success, and then assuage the grief of the bereaved relatives.

Joe Williams and his daughter had taken their places on the right-hand side of the hall and had requested Willie Mack, a former speaker and influential chief, to assist them in announcing the financial transactions. They spread a blanket on the floor on which the bills were counted, and beside this Willie knelt. Joe gave him a sum of money, which was counted and re-counted; Willie then held it up in the vain hope that it could be seen by everyone in the hall. He announced the amount, also that it was to redeem (the divorced) Mrs. George Nelson from her late husband, and that it would "make clean the place where she sat." A young man delivered the money to George who added it to the general stock for later distribution. Next a copper was produced, held up, and presented to him for the same purpose. Meanwhile Joe, assisted by his mother and other relatives, had been counting the money which they proposed to give to Captain Schooner in settlement of the previously contracted debt. One hundred and fifty dollars were produced and handed to Willie Mack, who held them up and announced that it was in return for the $100 given by Captain Schooner on a previous occasion to Joe Williams, his wife, his son, his daughter, his mother, and his stepfather. The bills

they after the funeral, the relatives of the dead person burn the remainder of his property, which passes through the earth to the ghost for whom it is intended. Ghost-singers have taken their places and begin to beat out music, and presently the recently deceased appears, stepping backwards from the back-room in time to the beating of sticks. He is at once surrounded by his fellows, each anxious to learn the latest news of relatives still alive. The dance is really to welcome the new arrival, and takes place irrespective of his rank. After it has been held, it is hopeless to attempt to rescue a dead person, although that has been done several times during the four days immediately succeeding death.

Only shamans are able to pass down into the land of the dead, though stories are told of inadvertent visits to it in relatively recent times. Human beings are prevented from visiting their dead relatives, but the latter, being supernatural, can come to the earth at will. They are always dreaded, and anyone who hears their whistling or their tongueless chatter crowds in his house, and hopes they will pass by. Shamans can understand their speech and to them the dead explain their mission. If the relations of a dead person have failed to burn all his personal possessions, he returns to earth to inform them, through a shaman, of the omission. The house is scoured for anything left and it is burnt at once near the grave, though no one knows how a ghost would punish failure to give him his property. Thoughtful people, remembering the scarcity of food in the land below, frequently give presents to their dead relatives by casting small morsels of food on the side of the central fire nearest the front door, beneath which is a passage to the lower regions. The food becomes magnified as it falls down this, so that even small fragments are sufficient to feed many hungry ghosts. Since the introduction of metal stoves, it has become customary to throw food into a fire kindled for the purpose in the cemetery; the most suitable time is at dusk, although people are always afraid that spectres may be prowling around at that hour. If sufficient presents are not given

or a ghost, he informs a shaman of the fact and the latter notifies the relatives of the deceased. If no shaman is consulted, the ghosts does not hesitate to help himself. Invisible, and armed with a barbed hook, he approaches a person who is eating and pulls away a crumb which falls to the earth. Should the eater stoop to pick this up, the ghost, robbed of his booty, hears the offender with his hook, causing toothache or sometimes a sharp pain in the head or stomach. Other ailments are caused by the ghosts living with invisible arrows those who have offended them. Consequently, no one picks up a crumb which has fallen, since it is impossible to know whether it has been an accident or a omission. Another indication of a ghost's hunger is loss of a tooth. The loser should throw it on a fire with an invitation to the dead to accept his offering.

The barrier between ghosts and human beings is considered to be little more than a wall of smoke, just too dense for ordinary eyes to penetrate. In early times intercommunication between the divisions of the two worlds was so easy that a dying mother was once allowed to send her dead child on earth. Unfortunately, the woman's mother one day insisted on holding her grandchild, unaware that he was a ghost. Shocked at his appearance, the old woman dropped the child, much to the anger of the dead people.* Ever since that time it has been impossible for human beings to see and talk with their deceased kinsmen. Like so many Bella Coola stories, it is doubtful whether this one is regarded as more than an item of ancient history; it is considered to be a fact, but it is not one that enters into the daily thoughts of the people.

Ghosts frequently come to their old homes at night where dogs can see them. If one of these animals begins to bark and gazes fixedly at a spot where nothing is to be seen, it is because a wraith is standing there and the dog's owner hopes that it will remain invisible. It is true that some individuals have received shamanistic power from a ghost, but more often a visitation is disastrous and to be avoided. A dead person often

*This story is recorded in detail later (I, p. 177).

NEB Bellacoola NEB

them renders it more likely that they will grant his requests. Therefore, a shaman is usually called upon to perform the following rites:

(1) Washing the mouth of a person who has died without voiding from his body the first salmon or eulachon of the season (I, p. 208).

(2) Taking emblems for the complicated rites of the potlatch (I, p. 190).

(3) Purging for endurance before starting on a journey, by pulling eagle down into the air (I, p. 106).

(4) Purging for evil by means of placing food on the water and blowing eagle down into the air at Menstrie Nose and Kwatna (I, p. 109).

In fact a supplication to any supernatural being can be made with greatest prospect of success by a shaman than by any other person.

The Power of Shamans

As has been said, a shaman actually has power within himself, and this is so strong that it may be a source of danger to others. If a man should pass behind one so endowed when the latter is eating, his spirit would be drawn from his body into the shaman's mouth, which would close with a click, crushing the spirit and killing the man. This is quite involuntary on the part of the shaman. It happened more than once among the early inhabitants, and since that time people have been very careful not to pass behind an eating shaman; this taboo was still in force until about 1885. A shaman, too, is said to be able to recall a spirit which has left its body, and thus caused illness. It is believed by some that shamans can see the position of a person's tally post, and so judge the length of his life. These examples show the varying beliefs of different Bella Coola concerning the powers of shamans.

But the force within the shaman is really more dangerous to its possessor than to others. As certain "unclean" objects are able to subdue supernatural beings, so do these same ob-

called out to him, and then remembered no more. It was obvious that she had seen a ghost.

It is over diseases caused by ghosts that a shaman from the dead has power. If a person picks up and eats any morsels which he has dropped he will usually suffer, because, though he thinks the crumbs have fallen, they have really been pulled from his hands by a hungry ghost, who thus showed his desire for food. By picking up and eating the fragments, the man thwarts a dead person who retaliates by forcing some sickness into him. Ghosts may visit this land of the living and ask their relatives for food or clothing, but mortals, unable to hear the speech of the dead, are unaware of the requests of their deceased relatives, and so do not answer them. The irritated ghosts respond by causing sickness. In such cases a shaman from the dead is able to suck out the cause of the ill, and sometimes to display it as a bone, twig, or other small object and at the same time to tell the sufferer what it was that his relatives desired. Like ordinary shamans, a shaman from the dead uses his own discretion whether or not to employ the violent beating of sticks, and like his fellow-practitioner receives payment from those whom he has helped. There are no fixed charges, but a successful shaman is always wealthy.

The intimate contact of ghosts with shamans has already been mentioned in connection with the ability of the latter to learn from the ghost of a murdered person whom he believes to be his slayer.

There is one method of sacrificial curing practised by shamans from the dead alone. If the sickness refuses to yield to ordinary methods, the practitioner makes ten cedar-bark vessels, fills these with grease and places them near the fire, one between it and the door, one on the inner side, and four on either side of it, parallel to the side walls of the house. By each vessel are placed two small wooden figures, roughly carved to represent men, and decorated with dyed and undyed cedar-bark. After endeavouring to suck forth the disease, with or without the assistance of the frenzied beating of sticks, the

phases of activity, leaving here only certain rules almost dies and a number of prohibitions which hunters must observe.

FOOD TABOOS OBSERVED BY WOMEN

Women must not eat bear meat. To do so would damage the ceremonia and cause profuse growth of hair.

Women of child-bearing age must not eat beaver. To do so would cause a difficult delivery.

A woman of child-bearing age must not eat steamed salmon until the sticks have been removed which hold it in front of the fire. She will bear twins if this injunction is disregarded.

TABOOS OBSERVED BY HUNTERS

No hunter or fisherman may leave the village in the morning if he has been foolish enough to break the night's fast. It is customary to depart at dawn and take a small meal when nearing the hunting or fishing-ground.

No hunter may drink water in which dog salmon have been soaked. Animals dislike this liquid and avoid a man with it in his stomach.

When traps have been set, and a party of hunters is sitting around the camp-fire in the evening, no one must pass between it and one of his fellows. If this should be done, heedlessly, animals would disregard the bait that has been set out.

When mountain goat hunters are travelling, the most expert must lead the party. When he sits down, so must the others, and no one can change places with him. This is said to be a custom of the Carriers as well as of the Bella Coola.

When a hunter is cutting up a bear, he must be careful not to cut a vein which is said to run across the chest and down each fore-paw. To do so causes sickness.

When a hunter kills a bear, he must place either the skull or the whole head in a tree near the scene of the kill, otherwise he will become blind. In some families, the men remove only an eye, place it in a notched stick and set this under an over-

[Secret Society Initiation]

WINTER CEREMONIAL DANCES 69

receive two prerogatives at his initiation, one from each parent, or from some other ceremonial relative. In this case both are expounded. The singers listen intently, knowing that they will never be called upon to compose songs or the drama, or dances. According to some informants they immediately sing one, as if they had just created it, though it was really prepared in advance. The *kukwakim* listen until they have mastered it.

Halpats now distributes the food provided by X's father, or whoever is responsible for his initiation. At every *hamatsa* ceremonial the marshals are the first recipients, then the singers, and finally the others without distinction. As the guests are eating, X's father gives presents to all, without deference to rank. An announcer calls out:

"Here are [for example] ten bear-skins from X's mother. They are to obtain for him his cedar-bark bracelets."

These goods are then distributed. Similarly other gifts from various relatives are handed out for his anklets, his blanket, his collar, his head-dress, and all other parts of his clothing. As each item of his ceremonial costume is validated, X dons the prepared article. A novice's head-dress consists of a round roll of dyed cedar-bark, covering a grass frame; in *Alert* and the other villages of the upper valley this is decorated with a tuft of swan's down. The *kukwakim* of these villages also wear a distinctive decoration consisting of a swan's skin with the feathers attached. In recent years it has been customary to pile all the goods together and distribute them as *dzy'ōl*, which has the significance of "something that has vanished for the novice's dyed cedar-bark." Theoretically, the aim of the donor is to bestow his presents on all equally, but if he finds that he has some remaining, he gives these to the chiefs, or to the relatives of someone whom he expects will soon be a novice. None of the goods used in general distributions are returnable, but a chief who receives an extra gift at the end usually remembers from whom it was received and cancels his indebtedness at the earliest opportunity. There is no close connection between the disbursements and the worth of the

[illegible]

[Assist Society Initiation]

WINTER CEREMONIAL DANCES

prohibitions that last not for one year, but for four. X is now subject to any other restrictions. If he wishes to go hunting he can remove his cedar-bark collar and long is for anyone in the forest near his village, redressing it on his return. The *katcinas* show considerable interest in their new member, not only by warning him what he must not do, but by teaching him how to dance and to growl or make other of the ceremony, but unusual, noises. During the remainder of the ceremonial season X is required to attend every *katcina* dance, thereby learning much of the ceremonial, and during the following summer his relatives, especially if food is plentiful, frequently invite the *katcinas* to their house. The singers leave out well-known tunes, or practise those which will be required for the following winter; if a song has been composed for X he dances to time to it, in the style proper to his prerogative. Formerly, when there were many novices, dances of this type took place frequently and were useful in giving constant practice to singers and neophytes alike. As no calls from supernatural patrons can come at this time of year, it follows that all such dances are of a non-sacred nature, although the uninitiated are excluded. During his period as a novitiate, X has one privilege; he can take food from anyone at any type of ceremony. It is remembered that one novice was even bold enough to take food which had been placed as an offering for the dead.

When the next *katcina* season opens, X attends every performance. This is probably the most thrilling and nerve-racking period in his life. He does not know exactly when he will be allowed to give his dance, since that is a matter of arrangement between his relatives and the marshals, but he knows that the time will soon be at hand. When the great day, or rather night, actually comes, X is usually in a state of abject terror. The rite itself does not differ from those about to be described except that the first song relates the manner in which X found the repository. But the mental attitude of X differs greatly from that of an old performer. One informant,

obey one prohibition; he must not sleep with his wife for four days.

Like a Cannibal, X is liable to frenzy for the rest of the ceremonial season. During this period he remains secluded within his house, and the uninitiated willingly avoid him, believing him to be mentally deranged. He attends every *kusiut* dance, where his lowest moanings help to frighten the uninitiated. If strangers from Kimsquit or *Tä'ös* visit Bella Coola, he at once becomes frenzied, rushes to the beach and scratches them, precisely as a Cannibal would do; in this case he must be pacified in the same manner. A Scratcher always saves goods to recompense scratched foreigners. If it is the first time that X has danced, he must remain secluded for the following summer, and give his ceremony the next winter. During the warm months he remains within the back-room of his house, and though some of the uninitiated know of his presence, still believing him mad they do not intrude upon his privacy. The coming of foreigners during this period excites him to frenzy and he scratches them, irrespective of the time of year.

It might be mentioned that some Scratcher names are indicative of the dancer's function, and others, such as "The Cause of Fear," have reference to his powers.

THE BREAKER DANCE

When a Bella Coola speaks of the four which *kusiut* dances cause the uninitiated, he almost invariably cites in order the Cannibal, Scratch, and Breaker dances. *Kulusiut* with these three prerogatives have no more privileges than other members of the society, nor are they considered superior in rank, but similarity in their functions leads to an almost automatic association. If questioned further, a Bella Coola will usually say that he regards the Cannibal dance to be first, with the Scratch and Breaker equal, but less important. Breakers share with Cannibals and Scratchers the prerogatives of not blackening their faces; of having as theme for their songs the land

J: McIlwraith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

[The Breaker Dance]

above; of sitting in one of the back corners and receiving the first food at ritual meals; of paying those on whom they coercise their prerogative, and of liability to frenzy on arrival of strangers. This last prerogative, if it may be so termed, lasts for the ceremonial season, and in the case of a novice, for the following summer as well. Moreover, Breakers do not destroy the goods of fellow-Breakers, Scratchers, or Cannibals.

In view of the similarity of this rite to those already described, no effort was made to collect full details. Different Breakers have minor variations in ritual, similar to those already illustrated. The following is an account of the manner in which the Breaker, *Spek* of *Snaitli*, performed the rite a number of years ago. As on previous occasions, it will be convenient to use the present tense, and to refer to the dancer as X. *Spek* gave the following account of the origin of his prerogative.

Long, long ago, soon after the first people had come to this earth, a marriage was about to take place in the village of *Snaitlat*. At that distant period the people were so powerful that they could themselves initiate *hasiut* dances, and the bridegroom determined to do so in honour of the event. He chose to imitate the actions of *Sauelpumalsk Alquntam*, one of *Alquntam*'s sons, whom he remembered having seen throwing stones in his father's house before he, the bridegroom, was sent down to this world.[a] When goods were piled up ready for distribution as marriage presents, the man began to hurl stones around; one of them ricochetted from a box, struck his bride and killed her. This unforeseen accident solved the question of his name, as by universal consent it was decided that he should be called, *Spek*, "He of the Faulty Aim."

Since that time a law has been enforced that no Breaker may throw a rock except ceremonially during his dance, and the marshals punish one who disobeys this injunction. If a Breaker is in the forest with a number of *kukusiut*, it does not matter if he fails to uphold this tradition; the essential is that the uninitiated do not see him cast a stone, even at a yelping dog, the usual reason for doing so in Bella Coola.

When X wishes to dance he must first obtain the consent of the marshals in the usual manner. He also arranges with *kukusiut* to have boxes and other wooden objects placed within

[a] This being is also called *Nusiwaamuwlaai*, "The Cherished One."

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Boilerroom NEA

cause though an infant in arms, though uninitiated, can be brought to dances by its mother; distinctions between rich and poor, slave and freeman, become of slight importance; all that really matters is whether a person is or is not a *hamatsa*. Membership in the society seems to the uninitiated the most desirable thing in life, although their fears are always so strong that they never cease to dread actual admission. The feeling of class consciousness which exists in a somewhat mild form at other seasons of the year, gives place to a powerful sentiment of superiority on the part of members of the society over those who are not so fortunate. Even the respect normally shown to chiefs is submerged since they, too, are subject to the rule of the marshals.

Apart entirely from this attitude of superiority and inferiority, is the bond of fellowship engendered among members of the society by the rites. Whatever happens, the uninitiated *must* be deceived. Moreover, the psychological effect of gathering nightly in a body for a specific purpose is tremendous. Night after night they eat together; night after night they listen to the words of the marshals, who impress on them the need for co-operation and secrecy, who hold before them the good example set by their fellows who have carried out rites successfully, who emphasize the fact that they are doing as their fathers did. The ceremonial import is of greatest consequence at all these gatherings, but when the uninitiated have withdrawn the *kakuxiut* relax somewhat and enjoy themselves. The food itself is always of the best and some of the usual restrictions are removed. It is, for example, the only time that women are allowed to eat the flesh of seals. If this delicacy is provided the marshals enjoy the tidbits, but after Cannibals, novices, and others have received preferential treatment, the remainder is distributed to all and sundry.

It has been stated by some writers, especially those unfamiliar with the significance of native ceremonial life, that the dances of the coastal tribes are orgies of immorality. This point was investigated with care and it may be stated posi-

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

sionally, in a half-hearted manner, but it is not unusual for a man to allow the basin of water in which he makes his ablutions to remain standing for two or three weeks. Not many years ago the Carriers taught their neighbours to make a kind of soap from the ashes of burnt cottonwood sticks thrown into water; with this clothes are washed irregularly and in most cases from sheer necessity only. In former times bathing was a semi-sacred rite, but this fell into disuse with the passing of the old religion, and the use of soap and water merely for the sake of cleanliness has not become a daily habit. The women have more vanity; the younger girls especially like to have new clothes, though they wear them carelessly, heedless of fit. An effort is often made to clean up for ceremonial dances, but it entails little more than the removal of the more obvious dirt and the putting on, over unchanged undergarments, of a sweater. Pride in personal appearance, love of tidiness, delight in a clean house, are all quite foreign to the Bella Coola.

Probably the reason for lack of comforts in the houses is simply that the people do not feel the need for them. They consider it no hardship to sit on a rickety chair, scoop up food from a common dish and, if they think of it, throw morsels down to the dog or the cat. The smell, the flies, the dirt, the chaos do not concern them. Capable of undergoing privations, hardships, and even sufferings, they think neither of the comfort of themselves nor of others. Their domestic animals are often treated abominably, not through lack of affection or cruelty, but from callousness. More than once the writer has seen a favourite dog steal a piece of food from the table. Its master, after a furious blow or kick at it, would suddenly, as if by inspiration, throw a choice bit to the animal, saying:

"Why, he must have been hungry!"

Though the Bella Coola feel a kinship with animals unknown to the white man, it is not combined with any recognition of their feelings as living creatures. There are, of course, many exceptions, but on the whole public opinion demands generosity and kindness only towards human members of the group. The moral code is not concerned with animals.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE5 Bellacoola NE5

#192
[824] *tsā'mīk*: Tree, probably birch.
Kaiyakā': One of the first men to settle at *Kwiyai* in the beginning of time.
Kaiyāku: One of the first men to settle at *Snaiek* in the beginning of time.
Kalkun: Bella Bella woman mentioned in an ancient story.
Kalul: Kimsquit man.
[222] [262] *Kalpun*: *Kusiut* name of a Bella Coola man.
Kalpun: The gathering of fern root for food.
Kalpunetsun: Name conferred on their sister by the first settlers at *Snass* in the beginning of time.
Ka'lse-a: Kimsquit man mentioned in an ancient story.
[585] [842] *Kalumkilamuta*: Public ovation, previous to marriage, of the bride's ancestral myths in order to secure children to be born.
Kalpuna: Ritual on the day before a marriage, including the ovation of myths by the bride's relatives, the chanting of ancestors, and the singing of songs of all kinds.
[576] *Kamai-a*: 1—Mysterious supernatural woman.
2—"Please," or "Thank You," a word implying lowness.
Kamchany^{cr}: 1—One of the first men to settle at *Nuskus* in the beginning of time.
2—One of the first men to settle at *Nuxhalet* in the beginning of time.
3—Name of the first sky that fell in the beginning of time.
Kamalelā: Lazy supernatural beings who accompanied *Nusk'ymun*.
Kamalymun: Man mentioned in an origin myth of *Algulkul*.
Kamalkuks: *Kusiut* name of a Kimsquit man.
Kamtsany^{cr}: House brought to earth by first settlers at *Nuxhalet* in the beginning of time.
[824] [227] [824] *kamā'*: Kelp.
kamuk: Coal hook.
kamut: Termination.
kandra: 1—Shell fungus.
2—*Kusiut* dance in which a shell fungus is used.
Kanilhu: One of the first women to settle at *Snass* in the beginning of time.
kas-imut: Ceremonial crest.
Kawaia: Herald of a *Tsi'ai* chief in the beginning of time.
kawhay: Trap.
Kawchilhaw: 1—Daughter of the first settlers at *Sailiu* in the beginning of time.
2—Daughter of *Qāmaut*, one of the first settlers in the upper Bella Coola valley in the beginning of time.
[264] *kaulilhu*: Assemblage of the people for a meal of any kind.
Kawpaklanuk: One of the first men to settle at Rivers Inlet in the beginning of time.
Kawulhaqāiya-a: Supernatural berry-picker resident in the land of ghosts.
[825] *kāqai*: 1—Hump-back salmon.
2—Convex transverse beam near front and rear of house.
3—Mountain on the Dean River.
Kaqain: *Kusiut* name of a Kimsquit man.
Kaxaxa: Man mentioned in an ancient story of Raven.
[752] *kaxiut*: The seeking for shaman's power by a lad.
[825] *kaxuk*: Golden eagle.
[524] *kaxun*: Top, toy.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[192] *nulqimis*: Synonym for *gano'o*, the large cone-shaped sound whistle.
[534] *Nulqo'qit*: Side valley of the Kimsquit River.
Nulqo'kut: Side valley of the Kimsquit River.
[103] *Nulqsyaltsuu-s*, "Nearest River": River flowing from the north into the northern corner of the head of North Bentinck Arm. The Anglicized form is Nuskonsunney.
[825] *nu'xnqulsis*: Items supernaturally born from another or sea level.
Nuxsiya-s: enemy village.
Nuxulkuk, "The Mother of Dogs": Name given to a Bella Bella woman in an ancient story.
Nuxulk: Bella Coola valley.
[101] *Nuxylkmoy*: Inhabitants of the Bella Coola valley.
Nuyem: *Kwakiut* name of a *Haus* man.
Nuzem: Name of a female ceremony.
Nyaxtwaiaitis, "The Light Giver": One of the names of the supreme god.
nyaye: Light.
Nyaxin: *Kwakiut* name of a Bella Coola Cannibal.
Nyaxmalkalis: *Kwagu'ulh* name of a Kimsquit man.
Nyaxnalmenaye-s, "Stick-Breaker": Name taken by daughter of the first settlers at *Hauo* in the beginning of time.
[825] *nyaxnaxmi*: Mountain goat with long hair on its chest.
nyaxtiwat, "The Silent Night": The hushed assemblage of *kokwiut* after departure of a Cannibal.
[227] *nyaxtsaxtis*: Cross-piece which holds open mouth of chicken net.
Nyaxwalis: Village on Dean Channel below Kimsquit.
[585] [425] *nyaxwalisdaxun*: Public promise by the parents of bride and bridegroom on the wedding night that names will be provided for expectant children. This is combined with an exchange of origin myths. The term is also used for a similar promise of rights to hunting grounds, although the granting of this is extremely rare.
[828] *Nuye*: Mountain near *Hauo*.
nuyaikskaimut: Person who wanders away from home in despondency.
Nuyal'skais: One of the first women to settle at *Tal'ai* in the beginning of time.
Nu'yus-taim: Land of salmon.

o'alqum: Kimsquit term for a hill, anchor.
'O'o: Kwakiut kid mentioned in an ancient story.
[824] [262] *obal*: Grass with edible roots growing on tide-flats.
Okhpaxtay: Valley pre-empted by one of the first settlers at Kimsquit in the beginning of time.
Oqalaxmut: Herald who came down to the Dean River in the beginning of time.
oqi: 1—The *kwakiut* prerogative of ascending.
2—*Bad*, *offensive*.
Oqua-s: *Kwakiut* name of a *Smad* man.
Oulkqaytes, "The Worthless One": Name assumed by a woman in consequence of slights received from her husband's relatives.
[825] *Oxalakmut*, "The One that Changes Itself": Supernatural name of spring salmon.
[264] *oxaxalis*: Assemblage of the people for feast of any kind.